



# Committee on Homeland Security Democrats

**Bennie G. Thompson, Ranking Member**

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## THOMPSON SPEAKS AT HOMELAND SECURITY CONFERENCE

**March 16, 2005, Washington, DC** — Congressman Bennie G. Thompson, Ranking Member of the House Homeland Security Committee, gave the keynote address today in Washington, D.C. at the third annual *Defense Today* homeland security conference. The focal point of this year's conference was the fiscal year 2006 homeland security budget request. Congressman Thompson's speech focused on the committee's jurisdiction, budget, funding priorities and his vision of homeland security.

Congressman Thompson stated, **"It is absolutely important that we do everything that needs to be done to secure our homeland. Defending America is a top priority, and we need to continue to improve ways of ensuring that the American public is as safe as it needs to be."**

Congressman Thompson noted that the Administration's budget only provides for 210 new border patrol agents, when at least 2000 agents are needed to adequately protect the homeland. He underscored other important components of homeland security; including, aviation security, port security, critical infrastructure, terrorist watch lists, agroterrorism and cybersecurity.

**On first responders, he said "It is unacceptable to have budget cuts for police, firefighters, and paramedics and for there not to be dedicated funding for improving first responders' communication equipment. I will continue to insist upon efficient and effective homeland security strategies that best protect our citizens, our nation and our democratic principles."**

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